

VLR-2/21/89 NRHP-8/18/89

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

HISTORIC SITE FILE: Confederate Gun Mounts at PRINCE WILLIAM PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM Freestone Pt. RELIC/Bull Run Reg Lib, Manassas, VA

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name: Freestone Point Confederate Battery other names/site number: DHL No. 76-264

2. Location

street & number: Leesylvania Stars Park city, town: Woodbridge state: Virginia code: VA county: Prince William code: 152 N/A not for publication X vicinity zip code: 22192

3. Classification

Table with 4 columns: Ownership of Property, Category of Property, Number of Resources within Property (Contributing, Noncontributing), and Total. Includes sub-rows for private/public-State/federal, building(s)/district/site/structure/object, and counts for buildings, sites, structures, objects, and Total.

Name of related multiple property listing: Civil Wat Properties, Prince William County, VA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria: See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. 1

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is: entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet. determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet. determined not eligible for the National Register. removed from the National Register. other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions):

Defense: fortification

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions):

Landscape: park

7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions):

Other: earthworks

Material (enter categories from instructions):

foundation:  
walls: earth

roof:  
other:

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

[ X ] See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

[ X ] nationally [ ] statewide [ ] locally

Applicable National Register Criteria [ X ] A [ ] B [ ] C [ ] D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) [ ] A [ ] B [ ] C [ ] D [ ] E [ ] F [ ] G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):

Military

Period of Significance:

1861-1865

Significant Dates:

1861-1862

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Significant Person: N/A

Architect/Bulder: N/A

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

[ X ] See continuation sheet

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A  
 preliminary determination of individual listing  
(36 CFR 67) has been requested  
 previously listed in the National Register  
 previously determined eligible by the National  
Register  
 designated a National Historic Landmark  
 recorded by Historic American Buildings  
Survey #  
 recorded by Historic American Engineering  
Record #

Primary location of additional data:

State historic preservation office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other

Specify repository: DHL  
221 Governor Street, Richmond, VA 23219

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of property: 11.0 acres

UTM References:

A /18/ /3.03.900/ /42.73.860/  
Zone Easting Northing  
C /18/ /3.04.290/ /42.73.680/  
Zone Easting Northing

B /18/ /3.03.9200/ /42.73.650/  
Zone Easting Northing  
D /18/ /3.04.330/ /42.73.880/  
Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

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Verbal Boundary Description:

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification:

The boundaries encompass all four of the earthen batteries that were part of the Freestone Point Confederate Battery. The geographic feature called Freestone Point is also included within the boundaries because its location and physical characteristics dictated where the northern Potomac Blockade battery would be located and what the internal configuration of the Freestone Point Battery would be.

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title: Jan Townsend, County Archaeologist  
organization: Prince William County, Planning Office  
street & number: 1 County Complex Court  
city or town: Prince William

date: May 1989  
telephone: (703) 335-6830  
state: VA zip code: 22192

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Property Type: Potomac River Blockade

Summary Description

The Freestone Point Confederate Battery is located on Freestone Point in Leesylvania State Park, and rises 95 feet above the Potomac River. The battery has four individual gun emplacements, which are fairly simple in configuration. All are formed by a large, deep, rectangular depression with high earthen berms built up on the north and south side of each depression. They are oriented on the point in such a way as to be able to fire out into the Potomac River and back towards the mouth of Neabsco Creek. The park staff has cleared the vegetation (except for large trees) from the batteries and incorporated the Freestone Point Battery into its interpretive program. The views from the site, the setting, and the earthen structures all have a high degree of integrity.

Description

Freestone Point Battery consists of four earthen gun emplacements. (Refer to Figures 1 and 2) The first and most westerly is Battery W, located almost 950 feet west of the other three batteries. It is situated on a narrow, shallow shelf about 75 feet above the water and has a view towards the north and northwest. It measures 53 feet by 30 feet [from top of berm to top of berm] and is relatively shallow in depth. In all likelihood, Battery W was designed and built in order to discourage any Union ship from positioning herself at the mouth of Neabsco Creek. From that location, a ship easily could have shelled the Freestone Point Battery, and the Confederate gunners would have been unable to respond. Guns at Battery W would have thwarted such attacks.

Batteries X, Y, and Z are adjacent to one another and are located on the cliff about 90 feet above the Potomac River. They command views to the north, east, and south. The most southerly battery, Battery X, is about 26 feet on a northeast-southwest axis, 28 feet from front to back, and 5 feet deep. Battery Y, just to the north, is 31 feet long on a north-south axis, 34 feet from front to back, and 4 feet deep. Continuing to the north, Battery Z is about 28 feet long on a roughly north-south axis, 26 feet from front to back, and 5 feet in depth.

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On the north side of Batteries Y and Z are smaller, bermed depressions. The Y' dimensions are 26 feet front to back, 11 feet wide, and about 5 feet below the top of the berm. Measurements for Z' are 21 feet front to back and 5 feet wide; it is very shallow. These bermed depressions may be what remain of the ammunition magazines.

Compared to the Cockpit Point Battery, and probably the Shipping Point and Evansport batteries, the Freestone Point earthworks are simple in design. Each individual battery consists of a large, deep depression (where the guns would have been located) flanked on either side by large earthen berms. When Freestone Point Battery was functioning, much of it would have been lined with wooden revetments. Gabions may have also helped to give the battery its form. The magazines almost certainly were lined with and had a roof of wood, which may have been covered by a protective mound of earth.

What remains today are the basic earthen mounds and depressions. They are obvious and certainly capture the attention of visitors to Freestone Point. The State Park staff has cleared the battery areas of brush and are developing interpretive displays. The setting is natural, with hardwood forest behind and the Potomac River in front. The forested Maryland shore is about 1.5 miles to the east across the river, and Mason Neck State Park and Mason Neck Wildlife Sanctuary are to the north. To the south and downriver, communication lines that cross the Potomac River are barely noticeable. The overall integrity of the Freestone Point Battery and its setting is very good. The battery is viewed as an important feature of Leesylvania State Park and will continue to be protected from physical disturbance.

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Summary Significance Statement

For five months, from October 1861 to March 1862, the Confederate military succeeded in blockading the Potomac River, the Union's main riverine supply route. In addition to hindering the flow of much needed military supplies and civilian goods, the blockade was especially embarrassing for the Union political and military leaders. Freestone Point Battery was the most northern of the blockade gun emplacements. Its presence was made known to the Union navy in September 1861, a month earlier than the other three batteries. In addition to being one of the four principal blockade batteries that fired on ships attempting to run the blockade of Washington, Freestone Point Battery also was probably built early and in such a prominent location to distract the Union navy from the building of the "strong" batteries, such as the one at Cockpit Point. In all likelihood, when the other batteries were built up to sufficient strength in December or January, Freestone Point Battery was abandoned. Freestone Point and Cockpit Point batteries are the only remaining Potomac River blockade batteries.

Historical Background

To blockade the Potomac River effectively, the Confederate engineers had to find a region south of the Occoquan River where the river channel was constricted and defensible batteries could be built. After a survey of the Potomac, the engineers settled on the section of the river between the mouth of Neabsco Creek and Evansport (now Quantico) located about one mile south of Quantico Creek. Freestone Point Battery is the most northern of the Potomac Blockade batteries. It is situated atop a cliff that rises 95 feet above where the Potomac River and the southern shore of Neabsco Creek meet.

Freestone Point Battery was built in September 1861. Its designer and builder is unknown. Presumably, its construction would have been under the overall command of Confederate States Navy Commander Frederick Chatard, who commanded the rest of the blockade batteries.

Colonel Louis T. Wigfall of the 1st Texas Regiment was in command of the battery when its existence was reported on September 23, 1861. On that day, Seminole picked up a party of slaves attempting to cross the Potomac River to Maryland. (Wills 1974:14, 1975:69)

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They told of two hundred men with two heavy guns on their way to Freestone Point. Two days later, at 9:30 A.M., Jacob Bell, under the command of Lieutenant Edward McCrea, fired six shells into the battery dispersing what appeared to be workmen. There was no response. Seminole then began firing and received an immediate return of fire. The existence of a battery was confirmed. Seminole and Jacob Bell were not damaged. Valley City, a steamer belonging to the Potomac Flotilla, was caught in the firing, however, and received a shot through her bow. She was towed to the safety of Indian Head across the river, where she and the Seminole accidentally collided. The battery continued to fire on ships going up and down the river until 3:00 P.M. that afternoon.

In his report, Lieutenant McCrea of Jacob Bell estimated that there were four guns at the battery and noted that one rifled gun had an extreme range "as many of their shots, during their firing, almost touched the Maryland shore" (Moore 1977, Vol. 3:36). He also reported that there were no injuries.

The only official Confederate reference to this artillery exchange is in a letter from Colonel Wigfall to President Jefferson Davis (Hanson 1961:47). He mentions that the Confederate force consisted only of "Hampton's Battery," which may refer to Imboden's, Reilly's, or Rives's artillery company. All were in Brigadier General W. H. C. Whiting's division and available to Colonel Wade Hampton. It is known that the 6th North Carolina Regiment, later to become known as the "Bloody Sixth," at least attempted to provide support to the battery. Believing that Union forces were landing, the 6th North Carolina troops, under the command of Colonel W. Dorsey Pender, marched the seven miles from their camp east to Freestone Point Battery (Iobst and Manarin 1987:38). They stayed the night and all things considered "spent a very pleasant time." The 6th returned to camp the next day.

Colonel Wigfall became General Wigfall and was soon elected to the Confederate Senate. When he resigned his commission, Colonel James J. Archer of the 5th Texas Regiment took charge of the brigade. Colonel John B. Hood then replaced him.

Although the battery had been discovered, the Confederates still intended to open fire simultaneously upon Union shipping from all the blockade batteries. To this purpose, they had left in place a shielding of trees in front of each battery. The trees had been

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partially cut through so that they could be felled at the same time. On October 14 there was a major windstorm, and some of the cut trees at Freestone Point toppled, exposing the fortifications.

On the morning of the 15th, Pocahontas, followed about a mile back by Seminole, headed down the Potomac. Just before 10:00 A.M., the lookout on Pocahontas spotted the Freestone Point battery. The ship fired one shot at the battery and continued downstream. The shell struck the middle of the earthworks and passed clear through to the wooden revetment inside. The surprised Confederate gunners rushed to their positions; and when Seminole came into range, the battery opened up with as many as five guns. The ship and battery exchanged fire until the ship moved out of range. As the two ships came upon Shipping Point and Evansport, they were again bombarded and responded in kind. No one on the ships was injured, but Seminole sustained some damage. (Hanson 1961:47-48)

In November a routine was established for the 6th North Carolina. As it was with other regiments in the area, part of their responsibility was picket duty, which involved spending a day and a night in support of a battery. Colonel Pender described one such operation:

I took my Regt. out Friday night on Picket duty--at the battery 7 miles [Freestone]--and got back Saturday. It commenced to rain that night & rained incessantly 24 hours all of which we had to take as we had no tents. The men in addition had to wade two streams waist deep, and you may be assured we were all pretty wet, & then had to sleep in wet blankets last night, but as yet I have not heard of any ill results. (Iobst and Manarin 1987:44)

He added that the men seemed to take the hardships "very cheerfully," and they were anxious to see the batteries fire at two small schooners that were passing (Iobst and Manarin 1987:44).

According to Wills (1974:14; 1975:84), Freestone was abandoned after the other batteries had been built up to sufficient strength. This would have probably been in December 1861 or, more likely, January 1862. Hanson (1961) makes no mention of abandonment. In his account of the shelling of Pensacola, which occurred on January 12, Hanson (1961:66) believes that the Freestone Point Battery was the first to fire at the passing warship, which was attempting to



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run the blockade to join forces gathering to attack and capture New Orleans. Wills (1975:114) believes that the Cockpit Point Battery was the first to fire.

Wills (1974:14) points out that Freestone was probably built as a ruse to draw the attention of the Potomac Flotilla away from other batteries, such as Cockpit Point and Shipping Point, which were still under construction. The guns at Freestone could never command that part of the Potomac River, and the Union ship commanders quickly learned how to stay out of range. This may have been another reason for its abandonment. Freestone Point Battery is very simple in design and construction when compared to the Cockpit Point Battery. This would support the opinion that Freestone Point Battery was built to serve a temporary function. There is no account of Union troops landing at Freestone Point Battery after the March 1862 withdrawal of the Confederate army to the south. The guns were probably removed at the time the battery was abandoned.

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Hanson, Joseph Mills

1961 Bull Run Remembers...The History, Traditions  
and Landmarks of the Manassas (Bull Run) Campaigns Before  
Washington 1861-1862. National Capitol Publishers, Inc.  
Manassas, VA.

Iobst, Robert W. and Louis H. Manarin

1987 The Bloody Sixth: The Sixth North Carolina  
Regiment Confederate States of America. Butternut Press, Inc.  
Gaithersburg, MD. Reprint.

Moore, Frank (ed.)

1977 The Rebellion Record: A Diary of American  
Events, Volume 3. Arno Press, New York, NY.  
Reprint.

Wills, Mary Alice

1974 "Freestone Point." Echoes of History  
January 1974:13-14.

1975 The Confederate Blockade of Washington, D.C.  
1861-1862. McClain Printing Company, Parsons, WV.

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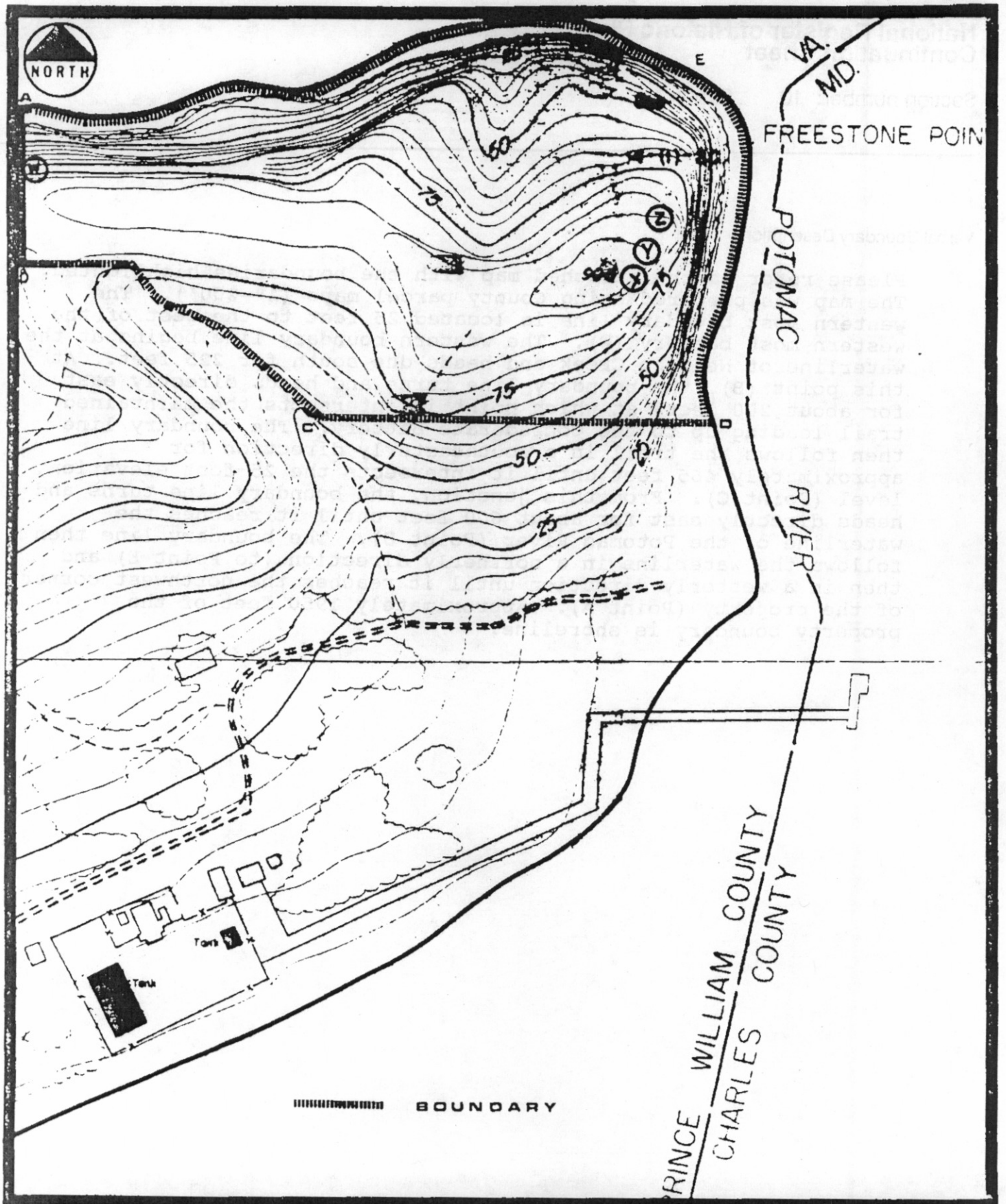
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Verbal Boundary Description:

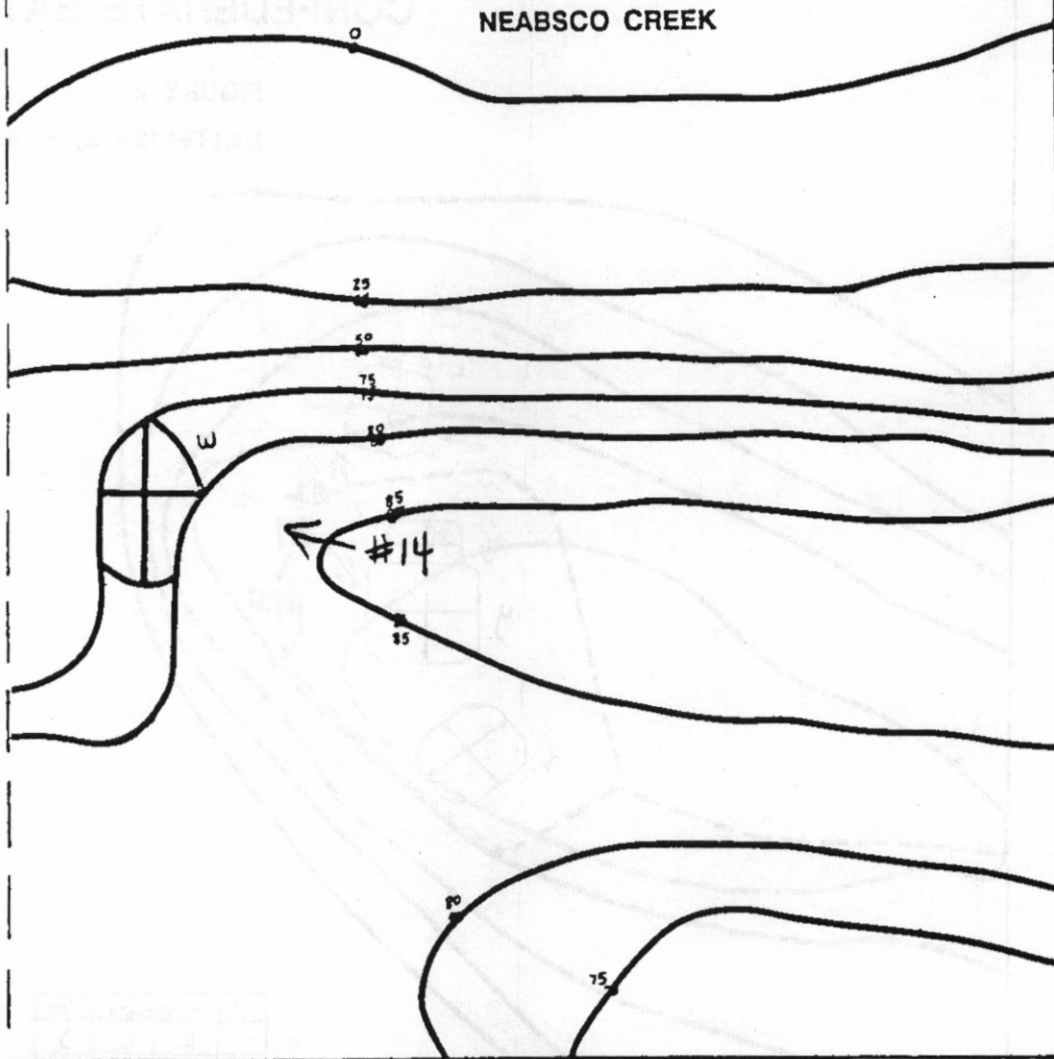
Please refer to the attached map with the boundaries highlighted. The map was prepared using County parcel maps (1"=200'). The western most boundary line is located 25 feet to the west of the western most battery (W). The western boundary line begins at the waterline of Neabsco Creek and heads due south for 225 feet. At this point (B), the boundary line turns and heads directly east for about 200 feet, at which point it intersects the maintained trail leading up to the Confederate Battery. The boundary line then follows the trail in a southeasterly direction for approximately 465 feet until it intersects the 25-foot elevation level (Point C). From this junction, the boundary line turns and heads directly east for about 600 feet until it reaches the waterline of the Potomac River (Point D). The boundary line then follows the waterline in a northerly direction (to Point E) and then in a westerly direction until it reaches the northwest corner of the property (Point A). Approximately 1950 feet of the property boundary is shoreline.

# FREESTONE POINT CONFEDERATE BATTERY

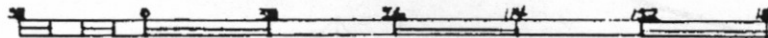
1" = 200'



N 349,000



SCALE 1" = 38'



Dimensions (ft)			
	L	W	D
W	52.5	29.5	

# FREESTONE POINT CONFEDERATE BATTERY

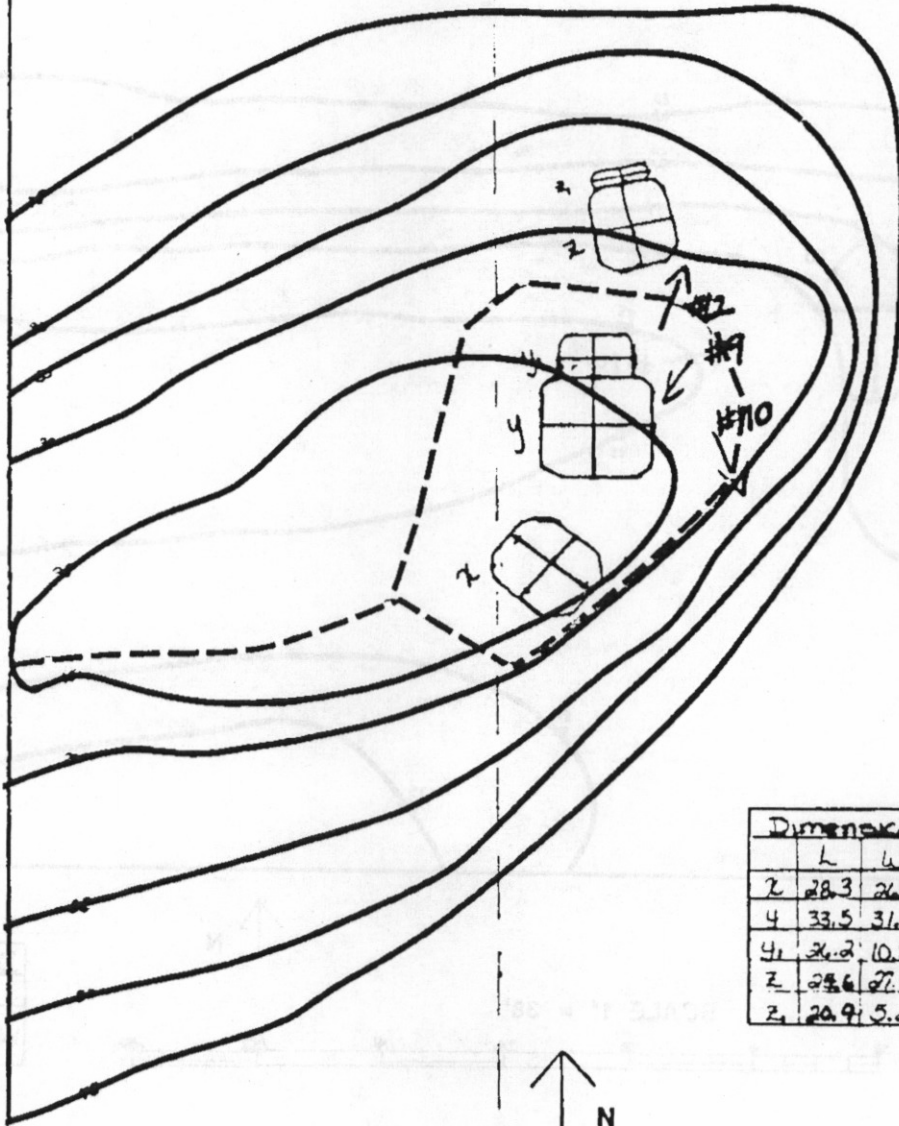
FIGURE 1  
BATTERY W

E 2,357,000

E 2398100

# FREESTONE POINT CONFEDERATE BATTERY

FIGURE 2  
BATTERIES X, Y, AND Z



Dimensions (ft)			
	L	W	D
X	28.3	26.3	5.0
Y	33.5	31.2	4.2
Z	26.2	10.8	4.6
Z	28.6	27.6	4.6
Z	20.9	5.2	3.0



SCALE 1" = 38'



CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 FEET

466

556' 11" NE  
(OCCOQUAN)

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



77° 15' 38' 37" 30"      2 360 000 FEET (VA.)      306 000"E      707

350 000 FEET  
(VA.)

OCCOQUAN BAY

476

FAIRFAX CO  
PRINCE WILLIAM CO

VIRGIN MARY

475

CHARLES CO

CIVIL WAR PROPERTIES  
Prince William co. VA

Indian Head Md.-VA. Guard  
Freestone Point Confederate Battery  
Prince William County, VA

C-15/304290/4273650

D-18/304330/4273650

474



473

PRINCE WILLIAM CO  
CHARLES CO

35'

T O M A C  
AREA

GOVT

Hear

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